

INTRODUCTION



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The Mesa-Falcon Field Airport Master Plan update is being financed as a cooperative effort between the City of Mesa, the Arizona Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division (ADOT) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The master plan is a comprehensive analysis of airport needs and alternatives with the purpose of providing direction for the future development of this facility.

This master planning effort for Falcon Field is actually an update of a previous master plan completed in 1978. It is typical for airports to periodically update their planning, particularly in view of the dramatic changes occurring in both the aviation industry and in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Soaring costs and interest rates changed the complexion of general aviation in the early 1980's. While personal and pleasure flying have decreased, business-related flying has increased.

This master plan is evidence that the City of Mesa recognizes the challenges inherent in

providing for the future aviation needs as well as the importance of Falcon Field to the community and the metropolitan area. The cost of maintaining a viable airport is an investment which yields impressive benefits to a community. By maintaining a sound, flexible master plan, Falcon field will continue to be an economic asset and a source of pride for the City of Mesa.

STUDY OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The primary objective of the Master Plan is to produce a long-term development program which will yield a safe, efficient, economical, and environmentally acceptable air transportation facility. The accomplishment of this objective requires an evaluation of Falcon Field Airport and a determination of what actions should be taken in the future. The completed Master Plan provides a step-by-step, or phased, outline of the proposed developments, and gives responsible officials

advanced notice of future needs to aid in scheduling and budgeting. This allows for orderly and timely development of the airport. To accomplish the objectives, the master planning team:

- ♦ Inventories and analyzes data pertinent to the airport and its environs.
- ♦ Collects and analyzes general economic factors and evaluates the area's aviation activity.
- ♦ Forecasts aviation activity through the year 2015.
- ♦ Determines facility requirements for the airport.
- ♦ Researches the impacts associated with further development of the airport.
- ♦ Develops alternative ways to provide needed facilities.
- ♦ Proposes an airport layout plan which is compatible with both aviation demands and the local environment.
- ♦ Schedules priorities of proposed development items and estimates development costs.

The Master Plan study approach includes the involvement of the public throughout the planning process. This will be accomplished through the input and guidance of a Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) established specifically for this study, and through public information meetings to be held at strategic points during the course of the Master Plan study.

The PAC is a nonvoting advisory group established by the airport's management to assist the consultant in the performance of the master plan update. The members functions are to review and comment on working papers, provide a forum for

discussion of issues, contribute ideas and potential solutions and provide a linkage to the constituent groups whom they represent, on the progress and findings of the study. Represented on the PAC is the complete spectrum of interests concerned with airport development: government, both political and technical, neighbors, aviation personnel, military officials, business and community leadership, FAA and ADOT.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS

Several important subject areas will be reviewed during the course of the master plan process for Falcon Field. These subject areas are separate but related to development of the airport. Airspace in the Falcon Field area is complex. Factors that contribute to this complexity include the Phoenix Terminal Control Area (TCA), Williams Air Force Base and the local traffic pattern which includes helicopter activity at McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Company. Future development as well as local traffic pattern issues will require a complete evaluation of this airspace. In this regard, the preparation of a Part 77 Airspace Plan for Falcon Field should include the heliport airspace at the McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Company (located just north of the airport) thereby creating a comprehensive airspace plan for both facilities.

Another special subject will be the impact of the closure/conversion of Williams Air Force Base on activity at Mesa-Falcon Field. The federal government has approved the closure of the airbase in 1993. The political, economic and aviation impacts on the community as well as Falcon Field which result from the base closure will not be known prior to the master plan's completion. The significance of the impact on Falcon Field could range from minimal to major, depending on the course of events. The City of Mesa and airport management must continue to monitor the effects of the base closure/conversion.

Other specific subjects which will be addressed during this study include the following:

- ♦ Future role of the Airport (aircraft type, runway length, etc.).
- ♦ Airport development priorities.
- ♦ On-Airport land use (aviation vs. non-aviation).
- ♦ Taxiway Access.
- ♦ Economic benefit to the community.

- ♦ Existing pavement strengths.
- ♦ Security and access control.
- ♦ Future aircraft/airport noise.
- ♦ Future Off-Airport land use.
- ♦ Review of environmental issues.

In order to assist the reader unfamiliar with airport terminology and acronyms, a glossary has been included as an appendix of the master plan.